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A COMPARISON OF THE RELIGIOUS POLICIES
OF AKBAR AND AURENGZEBE.

An Essay,

WHICH OBTAINED THE LE BAS PRIZE
FOR THE YEAR M.DCCCLVIII.

BY

LUMLEY SMITH, B.A.

FELLOW OF TRINITY HALL,
AND STUDENT OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

m-l

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1858.

TO
THOMAS CHARLES GELDART, Esq. LL.D.

MASTER OF TRINITY HALL, AND LATE VICE-CHANCELLOR,

This Essay

IS BY PERMISSION DEDICATED

AS

A MARK OF RESPECT AND OF GRATITUDE

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BY

THE AUTHOR.

A LARGE number of Members of the Civil Service of India who were students at the East India College at Haileybury, at various intervals during the thirty years that the Rev. C. W. LE BAS, M.A., formerly Fellow of Trinity College, was connected with that Institution, desirous of testifying their regard for Mr LE BAS, and of perpetuating the memory of his services, raised a Fund which they offered to the University of Cambridge for founding an annual Prize, to be called in honour of Mr LE BAS, The *Le Bas Prize*, for the best English Essay on a subject of General Literature, such subject to be occasionally chosen with reference to the history, institutions, and probable destinies and prospects of the Anglo-Indian Empire.

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The subject for the Essay proposed by the Vice-Chancellor for the year 1858 was:—

The Religious Policy of Akbar compared with that of Aurengzebe.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author wishes to acknowledge his obligations to the Rev. Charles Hardwick, Fellow of St Catharine's College and Christian Advocate, for several valuable suggestions and corrections, made while the sheets of this Essay were passing through the Press.

INNER TEMPLE,

Nov. 12, 1858.

THE RELIGIOUS POLICIES
OF
AKBAR AND AURENGZEBE.

THE doctrines of liberty of conscience and freedom of religious opinion have been so long admitted, and are now so firmly established in England, that the slow stages of their progress towards stability and credit are either forgotten or underrated. The principles upon which they rest seem now to be as simple and obvious as they are incontrovertible; and familiarity with the existence of toleration makes a deviation from its practice appear at once unnatural and unjustifiable. The policy with respect to religious matters adopted by rulers or nations at different periods of history or in different stages of civilization, are judged by the canons and tested by the experience of a later century and a more refined polity. Persecution of opinions and interference with thoughts are ascribed to the cruelty of an individual or the jealousy of a class, and, in estimating the errors of a governor, it is forgotten, that, as a question of political economy, the advantage of a free toleration has only been established by slow degrees. The right

of the magistrate to scrutinize the thoughts as well as the actions of its subjects has been admitted in the early stages of all governments, and is a natural offset of the paternal relation in which they all originally assumed to stand towards their children or citizens. It is only the recognition of the true nature of government as a social institution for social purposes and social convenience, which destroys its claim to jurisdiction over meditations and convictions. It is only the proof given by experience of the inutility of persecution as a means of persuasion or correction, which prevents the exercise of such a jurisdiction.

By gradual and systematic steps the progress of toleration kept pace with the growth of our political freedom and the emancipation of our minds from the trammels of tradition and prejudice. The free exercise of the writ *de hæretico comburendo* was supplanted by those "moderate and convenient penalties" which were imposed on Nonconformists to the established ritual, and the overthrow of which tasked so long and so arduously the logic and eloquence of Chillingworth and Selden and Locke. In later times disabilities have taken the place of penalties, and the same battle has been fought again with the same result. We have been more fortunate than some other nations in the temper which has characterized these contentions, in the integrity of the advocates of reform, and in the justice and moderation of our conclusions. It was no recommendation of a tolerant policy to Louis XV. that its champion was Rousseau, and that its demand was based upon a protest against

monarchy. The attacks of Voltaire upon persecution had little weight with the rulers of a dominant Church, when they sprang from an equal disbelief in all creeds and an open ridicule of all Churches. In despotic governments, whether of Church or State, novelty is itself an object of suspicion, and innovation an offence. No power established on a narrow or infirm basis can look with favour upon principles, the confirmation of which rests upon new considerations of the origin and object of that power. The fiction of a social compact, which served as a foundation for the arguments of Locke, was a fiction not incompatible with the spirit of our institutions. In France or Spain it would have been absurd as well as fanciful. Wherever the struggle against forced conformity linked itself with popular discontent and revolutionary sentiments, the contest became bitter and uncompromising; resulting either in the triumph of despotism or the dismemberment of empire.

The admission, that experience has been the great teacher in matters involving religious controversy, must modify considerably the judgments which are to be pronounced on the policies of individuals who have had little or no assistance from such a guide. In the two instances, which we are about to consider, are presented monarchs whose views were confined by the boundaries of a peninsula. Persecution had been enjoined upon them as a duty instead of being prohibited as an offence. By its active employment the early proselytes of their religion had consolidated an empire extending into Europe, Asia and Africa.

The propriety of its application to the circumstances which surrounded them would be strictly a question of political expedience: the rigour or laxity of its exercise would depend on the natural disposition and intelligence of the men. It is gratifying to find, at a time when our own statute-book was still disgraced by barbarous enactments against Arians and Anabaptists, while able disputants were basing incontrovertible truths upon improbable fictions, and Bayle was writing volumes full of subtleties to prove that the text, "Compel them to come in," did not justify persuasion by punishment and conversion by the stake, an Oriental monarch engaged upon the same problem and working out the same conclusions by means of the two great principles of utility and humanity.

Still possessing in theory the intolerant doctrines which in the first stages of their progress had proved destructive to the religions which they had encountered in Persia, Syria, and Africa, the practice of the Moslem in India had, for reasons which will be touched upon hereafter, assumed a milder and more politic form. While a broad line of demarcation existed between the faithful and the unbelievers, and while frequent outrages were committed by zealous and unscrupulous Moslem, yet no lasting or vigorous attempt at the conversion of the Hindús was made subsequently to the first conquest and settlement of the kingdom; and the occasional injuries and incessant insults which they endured were the incidental miseries of a conquered race. Energy of

character and established power were on the side of the professors of the one religion, while numbers and antiquity supported the other. Hating idolatry, the former tolerated its existence in consideration of the solid advantages of wealth and dominion. Abhorring proselytism and recoiling from conversion, the Hindús acquiesced in the presence of the intruders whom they were unable to expel. The mosque and the pagoda stood side by side in the streets of Agra and Delhi, and the temples of Juggannath and Nagarcot retained unconfiscated their opulent endowments. The distinction between the two races, already separated by religion, was enhanced by social and political inequalities. A different law adjusted their rights of property; a different assessment regulated their taxation; a different costume and peculiar nomenclature distinguished their persons¹. The division between conquerors and conquered, sedulously maintained, was fatal to internal happiness and prosperity, and rendered precarious and transient the success of all schemes of foreign dominion.

The career of Akbar occupied a period which was fertile in change to most of the nations of the civilized world; and it was propitiously situated as regards the annals of his own. The terrible course of his ancestor Timur had passed over Hindústan as well as the countries beyond the Himalayas. The old Mohammedan monarchies had crumbled before

¹ The Hindús laid aside their original names on conversion.—Elphinstone.

the shock. A pyramid of heads upon the banks of the Jumna rivalled that which had signalized the fall of Bagdad; and for days after the departure of the newly crowned Emperor of India the streets of Delhi were without inhabitants. No powerful kingdom arose upon the ruins of the ancient thrones. Various chiefs, by good fortune or vigour of character, secured a temporary pre-eminence; and eventually the Emperor Baber, descending from the hills of Cabul, founded the modern Mogul Empire. By his son his kingdoms were alternately lost and won; and Akbar, at the age of thirteen, succeeded to a newly acquired empire, of greater bulk than solidity. The whole of Hindústan, with the exception of Bengal and Guzerat, had been subject to Humayun, but his death was the signal for insurrection. Distinguished by great vigour and activity of body and mind, the Emperor Akbar united amiability of temper with goodness of heart. The blood of the mountaineers of Kharizm was mingled in his veins with that of the shepherds of the Jaxartes; and the climate of Hindústan had not yet engendered in his family the degeneracy of frame and feebleness of intellect which eventually corrupted it. Born in the desert of Scinde and educated in Persia, his prudence and patience had been exercised amid the difficulties of an exile's position, his courage tried in martial sports, and his understanding enlarged by observation and experience. To the ability of his father's ministers he owed the recovery of his revolted provinces; and his

own address ensured his triumph over the insubordination of his victorious generals. Extended conquests added to his name the prestige which was necessary to the dignity and repose of an Eastern king ; the empire of Hindústan was enlarged by the acquisition of Scinde, Guzerat and Cashmere ; and its influence was felt in the heart of the Deckan. His successes did not merely serve to swell the multitude of his hostile or nominal dependents, but, by the policy of his conduct, the new districts were incorporated with the old kingdom. Powerful independent chiefs were tempted to surrender by an honourable treatment, which made them nobles of Delhi, viceroys of the king, and confirmed them in their possessions. The glory of Akbar deprived his service of humiliation ; and active foes became zealous and trustworthy officers. His prudence disarmed rebellion, and never drove rebels to despair. By the marriage of Rajput princesses to himself and his sons, native states, which had resisted the attempts of his predecessors, were brought into willing subjection ; and the proudest of the Hindús ceased to regard union with a Mogul prince as a degradation fatal to their caste.

His internal administration bore the marks of an enlightened and benignant spirit. The happiness of his country and his subjects was promoted by the removal of vexatious and useless imposts, by the reward of industry, and by the encouragement of learning. A new assessment was made of the whole kingdom, and taxation apportioned to the fertility of the soil. An effective police ensured tranquillity ;

schools were established in districts and villages, and cities adorned with palaces and forts. But the great step, by which he distinguished his reign from that of his predecessors, was the removal of the disabilities and restrictions which pressed upon the Hindús. The Mussulmans no longer enjoyed a monopoly of power and emolument. Hindús were entrusted with armies, invited to court, and encouraged to explain their religious opinions. The jezia, or capitation tax, hitherto levied on all unbelievers, was abolished; and the pilgrims who crowded annually to the temples of Somnath and Juggannath, or the holy cities of Benares and Allahabad, were released from the tolls which had irritated without restraining them; the Emperor declaring that a vain and corrupt superstition was better than a total cessation of intercourse with the Supreme Being, and that, ill-directed though their piety might be, he would have no obstacles thrown in the way of the devout. At the same time the more vicious and prejudicial of their barbarous customs were prohibited; and widows could no longer be forced against their will to dignify by a terrible death the memory of their husbands. These favourable measures adopted towards the Hindús were followed by others which excited deep indignation among the Mussulmans, already beginning to doubt the zeal and suspect the fidelity of the Vicar of the Prophet. The usages which had been introduced into common life from the pages of the Koran were discouraged. The natural solar year replaced the lunar year of the prophet, and a

new æra dating from the king's accession threatened the memory of the Hegira. The name of Moham-med disappeared from the coinage; and the use of the Arabic language and of Arabic names was condemned. The long and venerable beards, which were the peculiar ornament and privilege of the Faithful, were as offensive to the eyes of Akbar, as, for other reasons, were the shaggy pendants of his Muscovite followers to those of Peter the Great; and their removal was an indispensable preliminary to an attendance at the monarch's durbar. Finally, the deepest traditional feelings of piety and custom were wounded by the introduction of a new confession of faith, which proclaimed that there was no God but God, and that Akbar was his Calif.

It is maintained by some Mussulman writers, scrupulous to avoid scandal, that Akbar, as a youth a devout Moslem, returned at the close of his life to the true faith; and they ascribe his temporary defection from orthodoxy to the evil influence of his friends, the learned Feizi and his brother Abul Fazl. Others, more vehement in their resentment, pursue him to the grave with the charge of apostasy, and detect, triumphantly, in the circumstances of his dissolution the signs of an impending and inevitable damnation. There is little doubt that Akbar had ceased to believe in the efficacy of Islam. Naturally inclined to intellectual speculation, his favourite amusement was theological and metaphysical discussion, at which members of all sects attended to expound the elements and defend the doctrines of their

separate creeds. An equal impartiality, an equal encouragement was accorded to all; and in the controversies which Ulemas and Moulavies held with Pundits, philosophers and missionaries, they met with no special favour and assistance from the recognized head of their nation. The king seems to have regarded all the creeds, which were explained to him, with equal indifference. Emancipated from the fetters of Mohammedanism, and despising the fables of Hindúism, he failed to become penetrated with the truths of Christianity, with which the Portuguese Jesuits from Goa appealed to his convictions. In company with a few learned and sceptical philosophers, he betook himself to that system of Deism, which results from the contemplation of the nature of things and of men. The existence of a supreme intelligent Deity was indispensable to the existence of the world, and however unknown His attributes, however ill-defined His nature and disposition, this knowledge, in the opinion of the king, was sufficient for the satisfaction of the mind of a philosopher. For the multitude, possessing less cultivated minds, less discerning intellect, if visible emblems were necessary, the Sun and the Moon were to be honoured and adored as the most glorious works of the Deity. The ceremonies of religion were to be few and simple; and no usages were to be bound up with it which might be prejudicial or irksome to the community.

This simple scheme of religion Akbar attempted to substitute for the artificial system of the Hindús and the distorted fables of the Koran. He found in

it a neutral ground between the hostile creeds, upon which to erect his humane and cherished scheme for the union and consolidation of the two races. Regarding religion in the light of an institution of civil utility, in the light approved by ancient philosophers and modern economists, his intention was to render it conducive to the strength and permanence of his empire, instead of destructive to its prosperity.

A new and composite system was to embrace Mohammedans, Idolaters, and Christians; and of this united flock he wished to be the recognized leader or head. The annals of India proved by example the impossibility of uniting the whole or a large part of the peninsula into a single kingdom, while the inevitable difficulties of a conqueror were enhanced by religious disunion. The rule of Mohammed Toghlak had been acknowledged throughout the whole of the Deckan and the Carnatic; and in his new capital of Deogiri the monarch of Delhi had assumed the title of Emperor of India. Stupendous works attest his power, but even before his death his empire broke into fragments. The confusion, which had ensued on the death of his own father Humayun, must have convinced Akbar of the instability of Indian governments. Persuaded then of the expedience of the amalgamation, it remained to consider the obstacles which stood in the way of its accomplishment. With the Moslem he had to encounter at once fanaticism and self-interest, the two most powerful influences to which the nature of man is subject. There were few Arabs, few even of Arabic descent, in the cities of

Hindústan; but their earnest enthusiasm for their faith was almost equalled by the attachment to it of the mixed races and nations, which had successively crossed the Himalayas. The Persians in particular were sincere adherents of the prophet, whose mission had been to them a message of release from an effete and unpopular superstition. Affghans, Tartars and Moguls dated their conversion from the moment when they emerged from Scythia and from barbarism. In addition, the Mohammedan prayers and rites, as in all countries where Islam had set foot, were the badges of power, the marks of a dominant race. To suggest the abandonment of their creed was to avow the intention of merging the Faithful with the crowd, and reducing all ranks to the uniform flatness of Oriental slavery. Wisely enough they saw that no local or traditional barriers could perpetuate separation or prevent that ultimate absorption of the minority by the majority, which has so frequently taken place elsewhere. Religion alone, distinctive, peculiar and uncompromising, has succeeded in keeping apart Turk and Greek, Jew and Christian, Catholic and Moor. Without a separate religion the Moguls must have melted into the Hindús as imperceptibly as the Normans in England melted into the Saxons, or the Visigoths into the races of Spain. With the Hindús the difficulties were as obstinate, perhaps more so, though less obvious to the eye of the innovator. The translation of the Vedas, Puranas, and laws of Manu would acquaint the Emperor with the theoretical tenets of the mass of his subjects. He

would be struck with the antiquity of their faith; his intellect and imagination would be gratified by the efforts, which unaided they had made in science and speculation. But his understanding would despise their theology, and underrate the influence which it exerted over minds shewn to be capable of reflection and study. He would be little disposed to anticipate an indomitable attachment and devotion to a creed so absurd and unnatural.

To European eyes the popular theology of the Hindús appears a collection of monstrous and barbarous fictions; its ceremonies unmeaning and frequently abominable; its interference with ordinary life at once tyrannical and debasing. To the mass of the Hindús the fundamental propositions, which lie at the root of their religious system, are unknown and uncared for. Religion has for them been reduced by the priests to the performance of enjoined ceremonies, the observance of prescribed usages; and with this they are content. Ceremonies occupy in the hands of the Brahmans much the same position, that in the days of asceticism pleasures occupied in the hands of the Roman Catholic monks. When once it has been established that certain individuals or classes are the chosen mediators between the Deity and man, the only thing requisite to secure the power and influence of such persons, is to devise means for keeping men in constant need of intercession. By making a sin of pleasure, the mediæval priests were perfectly certain to have their frail penitents continually upon their knees before them,

confessing, imploring, trembling; completely in the power of their ghostly comforters. Trifling but innumerable acts of devotion were imposed upon the Hindús with the same object, and becoming interwoven with their daily habits and pursuits, kept constantly in their minds the dread of the powerful and vindictive divinities whose wrath the Brahmans alone could appease. There is a period in the history of every nation, generally occurring after the first decided step from barbarism has been made, when the religious element becomes all-powerful. The priests are then the supreme, though not necessarily the acknowledged rulers of the land; their persons are sacred, their deeds unquestioned. With advancing civilization superstition loses its hold; and religion appealing now to the reason and not to the imagination, the influence of its ministers in temporal matters inevitably declines. At the period of their ascendancy the Brahmans set themselves to work with elaborate cunning to perpetuate their supremacy and the dependence of the other classes. Two principles pervade the whole of their system, whether of religious, moral or political philosophy; they are the main-springs of all subordinate provisions, and comprise the whole of their instructions to the unenlightened. The first is the importance of religion, and, as involved in this, the sanctity of the Brahman class. The second is the iniquity or impiety of innovation of any kind.

The former of these was easy of establishment in the stage when religion was predominant. The se-

cond was disseminated by open teaching, and by the introduction of the system of castes. Originally, as we learn from the sacred books, men were divided into four classes, comprising priests, soldiers, artisans, and the degraded class of agricultural slaves. There is nothing in this arrangement peculiar to India. It existed in Persia. It was maintained for many centuries in Egypt¹. It has been traced by some historians in the division of Attica, between the four sons of Ion. In the infancy of a community its influence was beneficial. The horrors of war were mitigated by the restriction of the labours and privileges of arms to a single class; and we read in the florid writings of the Hindús that the Súdra watered his fields in peace, while the Cshatriyas contended in battle in those adjoining. Tillage and handicraft flourished in the hands of men trained from their childhood to the work of their lives, and instructed by the traditions and experience of their ancestors. Philosophy and science were pursuits of the dominant race, who secured by knowledge the supremacy accorded them by superstition. With vigilant caution

¹ This statement originated by Herodotus, supported by Plato, Aristotle and Diodorus, and adopted by all the world in modern times, has been attacked and demolished by M. Ampère (*Revue Archéologique*, V^{ème} année, pp. 405—416), on the strength of his interpretation of the monumental hieroglyphics. Sir Gardiner Wilkinson follows on the same side (Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, Bk. ii. c. 165). For a summary of the authorities in favour of the established theory, see Heeren's *African Nations*, II. p. 123 seqq. and an article on "Caste" in the *Encyc. Brit.* by Mr James Mill. As far as regards Persia, there is an interesting passage in the *Edinburgh Review* (Vol. xvii. p. 324), consisting of a translation from the poet Firdusi, and describing the fourfold division instituted by Jemsheed, the Greek Achæmenes.

they retained also the privilege of instruction, and the twice-born tribes alone were admitted to receive their teaching. The lessons which they grudgingly gave were perverted to support the pretensions of their class. New discoveries in astronomy were distorted to agree with the traditions of the Brahmans; and truths of science, which were found incompatible with the established fables respecting the origin and nature of the world, were carefully concealed from all but a trustworthy few, even of their own body. Extravagant antiquity was claimed for every feature of their social state, and its origin consecrated by a divine sanction. "Custom," says the Veda, "is the mother of religion;" and certainly if such were the case, custom very speedily devoured its child. For the last two thousand years Hindú life has moved uniformly in the grooves provided for it at the outset. The pictures presented to us in the books of Manu might be adapted with little alteration to the present day. The dress, the habits, the occupations of the Brahman are described there almost as modern writers would describe them now. The alterations, which have indeed taken place, have been all such as to strengthen the power of the priests, and render still more impossible the progress of change. The four castes, which were natural to so many incipient societies, were replaced by a more elaborate division, instead of, as elsewhere, disappearing when the benefit to be derived from them declined. Every trade became the privilege and destiny of a separate caste; and no man could leave his own profession or take

up another. The evils of the institution were magnified, after its advantages had ceased to exist. A complete want of sympathy was established between Hindú and Hindú. No man could eat with one of another caste. No form of religion could be gone through by them in company, except at the annual fairs and feasts, when it was to the advantage of the priests to collect crowds of pilgrims. The Brahman class alone remained unbroken, and by the disunion of the others was secured from all attacks on its supremacy. Modern inquirers agree in speaking of this later system of subdivision as productive of unmixed evil; and Bishop Heber, who found it in the way of all his attempts to spread Christianity, describes it as the most inhumanizing of the Devil's works.

At the same time the religion and its observances became more intricate. Brahmá, Vishnu, and Shiva, the three manifestations of the one God announced in the books of Manu, were reinforced by local and legendary spirits, till their Pantheon contained nearly forty thousand divinities. The ceremonies to be performed and honours to be paid increased in proportion, and priestly mediation became more and more indispensable. A splendid ritual succeeded to the simpler forms of antiquity. Gorgeous temples were built and amply endowed with lands; and their revenues sustained vast multitudes of priests of all degrees in splendour and luxury.

A subordinate characteristic of this marvellous system of machinery is the complete isolation into

which the Indian race fell. The forced and early civilization, which they attained, led them to look with contempt and disfavour upon alien nations, whose presence they disliked, and whose suggestions they rejected. By travelling themselves abroad these prejudices might have been dispelled and the advantages of intercourse rendered obvious, but the art of the Brahmans had guarded against this. No man could cross the Indus or embark upon the black water, as the ocean was termed, without loss of caste. So firmly was this tradition established that the Sepoys who, under General Elphinstone, were sent to Cabul, were esteemed to have broken their sacred threads on crossing the Indus, and never afterwards recovered their position among their countrymen.

In the internal history of Islam, as well as in matters peculiar to the Hindús, are to be found the reasons why the first burst of Arab conquest did not extend into India. The first century after the Hegira completely changed the character of the caliphs and their empire. The successors of Mohammed were men of prayer, poverty, and humility. The rulers of Damascus were Oriental despots, corrupted by ease and sensuality. The warfare was no longer for the glory of God and of Mohammed, but for the extension of the dominions of Moawyah or Hashem. With the change had come dissension and weakness. The rude virtues of the desert and the camp had been succeeded by the vices of a Persian court. Emirs and Agas began to look upon conquered provinces as

stepping stones to independent monarchies. Brave and devout soldiers, supplanted and insulted by eunuchs and slaves, sighed for the days of Omar, the captor of Jerusalem, and Kaled "the sword of God." Tarik and Cassim, who landed almost simultaneously in Spain and in Scinde, unequal in glory, were like in reward. Cassim's life was sacrificed to the ill humour of a Hindú captive in the Caliph's haram. Tarik was publicly whipped on the soil which he had conquered. The death of Hosein had already laid the seeds of the great feud between the Shias and the Sunnis. The fall of the Ommiades completed the dissolution of the empire. The black banners of the Abbasides triumphed in the East; Africa became Fatimite; while Spain still owned a descendant of the Ommiades. A brilliant dynasty now ruled at Bagdad. The lost provinces had swollen the extent, perhaps not the power of the caliphate; and, under the great Harun-al-Raschid, its splendour reached its zenith. But not even then did the efforts of the Moslem to subdue India meet with success.

N Mohammed Cassim had indeed, till his miserable assassination, contrived to maintain his footing in Scinde, and to make a gradual, though tardy, progress. But the circumstances which had facilitated the early conquests of the Arabs were wanting in India. In Persia the Koran was hailed as a refuge from the lifeless system of the Zendavesta. From Africa was driven not Christianity, but a corrupt, and little-esteemed superstition. But in India the Hindú system possessed the hearts and minds and

X

souls of the people. The preaching of a new God and a new creed had the effect of hardening their whole mass against the invader, to whom, as a simple conqueror, their yielding temper might otherwise have induced them to submit. That which was in Persia an auxiliary to the progress of their arms, proved in India an insuperable obstacle. Neither was the character of the Hindús such as to facilitate a rapid conquest. A stubborn and hardy people would have hazarded a single battle and abided by the result. The Moslem would have triumphed as they triumphed on the plains of Cadesia and the banks of the Guadalquiver. But union, firm and unbending, was foreign to the nature of the Hindús. Rajah after Rajah separately and successively was encountered and subdued, but no moral or permanent effect was produced. The blows struck by the invaders were like blows struck upon water. Their presence ensured submission, but its traces vanished at their departure. The spirit of the Hindús, too inanimate for bold and determined resistance, was such as to await with patience and constancy the opportunities which circumstances might afford.

At the change of dynasties the Moslem were swept out of Scinde; and at the end of the three centuries, during which the Hindus had comparative rest from their attacks, many changes had taken place in Persia. The empire of Bagdad had waned in its turn, and Tartars and Turks had broken in upon it, as the Goths and Huns had broken in upon

the Empire of the West. The Commander of the Faithful, beset by Seljuks and Bowides, became again a priest, and the Emirs who divided his dominions honoured him with a titular supremacy. One of these was Mahmud, son of Sebektegin, who had claimed for his independent chiefship of the mountaineers of Khorasan and Affghanistan, the title of "Sultan," or the Caliph's viceroy. The Affghans had early become zealous Mussulmans, and it was from the snowy mountains of Cabul that the new enemy descended to plunder and convert.

Twelve expeditions into the heart of India attested the devotion and cupidity of Mahmud. The virgin wealth of Nagarcot and Somnath surprised and adorned the city of Ghazni, and a permanent conquest was made of Lahore; but the mountaineers were unable long to support the heats of the plains, and, beyond the breaking of idols, pollution of temples, and capture of plunder, little was effected. Mahmud's successors dwelt at Lahore, with a view to extending their sway over India. A Moham-medan kingdom was eventually established at Delhi, and received a succession of masters, Affghan, Turk, Persian, and Mogul, of various abilities and tempers.

The chief result of the interval which elapsed before these events was, that the fanatical element which distinguished the early Arab conquests having been replaced by the political, the condition of the conquered race was less affected. The terrible denunciation of "the Koran or the Sword" was little heard in India. The invaders came in as conquerors,

and, after the first confusion had subsided, the religions went on side by side, equally exclusive, equally obstinate. The aptitude of the Hindús for finance rendered them too useful to be immoderately oppressed; while Persian became the language of the court, and Persians or men of foreign descent occupied all political offices. From the time of Mahmud to the time of Akbar was nearly six hundred years. It must have been perfectly clear to the latter, that the conversion, which had not been accomplished by a period of subjection so long, could not be effected by the personal influence of a single man. His only course was to supplant both religions by a new one; and, disbelieving equally in Brahmá and in Mohammed, he attempted, as has often been attempted without success, to set up the empire of pure reason. His plan was here defective. His new scheme was too theoretical for the Hindús; not gross enough for their satisfaction. The physical emblems which he adopted were peculiarly unfortunate as pointing to a return to the old fire-worship, which the Arabs had expelled from Persia. To the reproach of apostate that of Gheber was freely added. Both Hindú and Moslem were obdurate in their rejection of a negative religion, which consisted almost entirely in a disbelief of everything cherished by each of them. A few courtiers and philosophers joined the king, but his views scarcely travelled beyond the court. Some devout Khans carried their wrongs and their beards to the refuge of piety and of pilgrims, Mecca; and many of the king's own relatives grieved him much

by their reproaches. He died, as has been mentioned, according to some, a penitent believer. The dearest companions of his speculations had preceded him. His plans died with their projector.

Jehangir, "the conqueror of the world," and Shah Jehan, his son, were powerful despots of the ordinary Oriental type. They made war, built mausoleums, and begat sons to trouble their old age. The innovations on the old Mussulman regime were repealed. The confession of Islam was replaced on the coins, the era of the Hegira became again the standard of chronology, and the lunar year returned to bring into opposition the seasons of religion and of nature. Fifty years of prosperity enriched and tranquillized their empire. English and French envoys or travellers swelled the crowds which attended the daily *darbar*, and carried back to Europe accounts scarcely credited of the wealth and magnificence, the gold, the diamonds and rubies of the great Moguls, the exuberant population of Delhi, the beauties and luxury of the delicious gardens of Cashmere and Shalimar. In the South alone was gathering the cloud which was to extinguish their glory; but the name of Mahratta, as yet, inspired little attention and no fear.

The brilliancy of Shah Jehan's reign was equalled by the sorrow and distress of the last years of his life. His four sons, of mature age, versed in affairs of state, rulers of armies and provinces, did not postpone till their father's decease the struggle for power. Equal in spirit and courage, their dispositions were

different. Dara, impetuous, open and haughty, a Hotspur in temper, a Monmouth in indiscretion, was the eldest. With the dignity, frankness and liberality, but without the prudence of Akbar, he had inherited and openly espoused his religious peculiarities. Shuja was a sensualist. Morad, the youngest, was the least able and least refined. Aurengzebe, older than Morad, not inferior to his brothers in vigour or ambition, superior to them in conduct and address, was the successful competitor in this strife, fatal to them and to their father, whose blood stained and confirmed his seat on the musnud. His character has been written and re-written by travellers, historians, and poets. The ruler of Hindústan who first came into active contact with our own East India Company, the greatest, almost the last of the Moguls, his career excited attention in his own age and since. Under the auspices of his contemporary, Dryden, the tragic buskin introduced him to the English as a marvel of virtue and moderation, sinned against but not sinning, uttering amid misfortunes and oppression the language of Aristides or Cato.

“The sons of Indostan must reign or die,”

is the sad reflection of a pious and philosophic prince, upon whom Fortune has thrust empire. Modern inquirers deal less favourably with the memory of Aurengzebe. To his matchless duplicity, his unscrupulous intrigue, they ascribe his success in the contest, in which his ambition had led him to embark; to the coldness and ruthlessness of his heart, the crimes which he pretended to disavow; to the suspi-

cion and perfidy, which pervaded the court of a despot incapable of confidence or generosity, the clouds which obscured the splendour of his reign, the troubles which attended its close. His attachment to the Koran is pronounced hypocrisy; his devotion, a sham. Native historians extol his courage and ability, and are perplexed by the ill-success which baffled his undertakings. Fifty years he retained the power which he had grasped, and in wealth and splendour he yielded to no one of his predecessors. The old provinces which had been lost for three hundred years were restored to his empire, and the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda ceased to rival the magnificence of that of Delhi. But the prosperity was hollow; the seeds of decay had been long sown. His last years saw him worn out by Mahratta warfare, his armies beaten and disorganized, his treasury exhausted, his subjects disaffected, his children in arms against him or in exile. Perpetual dread of the fate which he had inflicted on his own father, was mingled with remorse for his crimes, and terror for the future beyond the tomb. The letters which he wrote in his last days open to us a sad and miserable spectacle of the futility of ambition sullied by crime, superstition unsupported by true faith. "Wherever I look," he says, "I see nothing but the Divinity. I have committed many crimes—I know not with what punishments I may be seized." Ninety years had the old man schemed and plotted and reigned, to die alone and in terror, frantically forbidding his sons to leave their distant posts of honourable banishment.

Whether the religious fervour of Aurengzebe were real or feigned, his quick understanding had appreciated the advantages of identifying himself with the old Mussulman party. To their aid he owed his success in the struggle with his brothers. He proclaimed himself the champion of Islam against the infidel and renegade Dara. His pretended wish to retire into monastic seclusion after the triumph of the true faith, lulled the suspicions of Morad, with whom he crushed successively his elder brothers, and who, too late, in the prison of Gualior, deplored the credulity which had cost him empire and life. The mode of his eldest brother's death was in accordance with Aurengzebe's assumed line of conduct. Bernier, who knew and admired him, has recorded his formal trial and his condemnation, not as a rebel, but as an atheist and a renegade from the creed of Mohammed. Aurengzebe affected to shed tears over his miserable fate. Once embarked with the fanatic party and seated by them upon the imperial throne, the Emperor persevered in the course, to which, perhaps, his own feelings inclined him. Rejecting all half measures, the religion of the Hindús was no longer to be regarded even with a tacit approbation: all the disabilities which had been heaped upon them in the old times were revived. Degradation, suspicion and oppression were to be their lot. The ardour of Aurengzebe reversed the few changes of Akbar which had been neglected by the lukewarm devotion of Jehangir and the indifference of Shah Jehan. Festivals were forbidden; temples were destroyed; and

the concluding step was the reimposition of the obnoxious poll-tax, the jezia, which brought home to them in undisguised harshness the conviction, that in the eyes of their rulers they were an inferior and conquered race, despised and distrusted, exposed without redress to unlimited contumely and oppression.

In adopting this rigid and intolerant policy, it is impossible to ascribe to Aurengzebe any deep political scheme for the diffusion of his religion in the empire, to which his arms had restored its original limits. His plans were sagacious, but never far-sighted. He was incapable of vast schemes of political organization and arrangement. His ideas were confined, his devices temporary. The severity with which he treated the Hindús was due partly to his natural disposition, partly to the circumstances of his life. His education had been conducted by rigid Mussulmans. His success had been owed to his identification with the cause of the prophet. His character for devotion involved him in measures for the suppression of idolaters, suited to the precepts of the Koran. The bitterness of his feelings was however more especially the result of his life-long contention with the Mahrattas. The sentiment of these rising mountaineers was hatred to Mohammedanism. With no fanatical respect for their own priests and deities, they fought for plunder and against Mohammed. In the reign of Shah Jehan they had first become formidable. Aurengzebe's

youth, manhood, and age were occupied in their repression. His dominions were ravaged, his envoys slain, his peace destroyed by Sevajee and Sambajee. His very successes recoiled against himself, for the conquest of the Mussulman kingdoms of the South had removed the barriers which had stemmed the torrent from the mountains. The contest was ruinous to himself, fatal to his successors.

It does not appear that the Hindú subjects of the Mogul acted with the southern tribes, whom the high-caste men of Oude and Rajputana despised as of debased and impure origin. But still throughout the whole of India, the subject race seem at this time to have been in a state of restless excitement and agitation. The Emperor's life had been endangered by a fanatical outbreak near his own capital; irritation at which provoked him to the final revival of the capitation-tax. Community of faith was, to the suspicions of Aurengzebe, sufficient to overcome local diversity and sectarian jealousy; and the ill-success of his contest with the mountaineers of the Deckan was visited on the indolent Rajputs of Rohilcund and the peaceful Ryots of Bengal and Behar. Direct persecution was little employed, but a prolonged system of indignity and oppression sufficed to embitter their feelings and spread disaffection. The line which separated Hindú from Mussulman, which Akbar had exerted himself to obliterate, was widened and deepened. The exclusion of the former class from all posts of dignity or profit was rigorously

and insolently enforced. The prohibition of fairs and festivals was an attack on the essence of Hindúism. The ill-treatment of the pilgrims to Jerusalem produced in Europe the crusades of the middle ages. If a similar active hostility was not provoked by the suppression of the pilgrimages to the holy places of India, it was from the difference of national character, and not from the absence of an equal feeling of resentment. Sufficient internal commotion and hostility was produced to paralyze the strength of the empire and hasten its decay.

Nor was the position of the favoured class at court eminently enviable. The state-craft of Aurengzebe bore the impress of his personal character, of a sleepless implacable suspicion. Careful watch was kept on the words and actions of ministers, whose powers were elaborately arranged for the purpose of mutual check and countercheck. Nominal jurisdiction was unattended by personal independence. The favor of the Mogul was given without his confidence. The enterprise of soldiers and viceroys was restrained by timidity or prudence. Wise and upright nobles shunned the dangers of official responsibility and left their work to men of desperate fortunes or practised duplicity. The same policy of unhealthy distrust was tried and failed, which failed with Dionysius of Syracuse, with Louis XI. of France, with Philip of Spain. The personal activity of the Emperor of Delhi prevented the dissolution of his dominions during his life-time, but the inheritance which descended to his posterity was a brittle though magnificent shell, ready to

crumble beneath the attacks of the Mahrattas on the South, and the Sikhs on the North.

The comparison of Akbar's reign with that of Aurengzebe is little advantageous to the latter. It is the comparison between good government and bad government, between a good man and a bad man, between prosperity and decline. But if their religious policies alone be regarded, it must be admitted that the problem to be solved was beyond the strength of either of them. The position was peculiar. There has been nothing similar to it in history, and no example can well occur hereafter. We have had conflicts of creeds and of sects of many kinds in Europe, but none of the nature and dimensions of that presented in India. There was found a vast and intellectual people, of a high order of civilization, mentally and morally sealed with the seal of ancient days. An interval had elapsed since that impression sufficient for the change of the face of nations elsewhere, for the extinction of the ancient language of the peninsula, for the decay of temples more massive than those of Tadmor or Luxor; but the indelible marks which in plastic infancy had been received were as deep and as bold as at first. The living tide of religious development had been congealed, at an unfortunate stage of its progress, into grotesque and monstrous shapes. The work of two thousand years lay between Hindúism and the rest of the world. Settled in the midst of this people was a minority, of foreign origin, but not of recent establishment, possessed of a purer though artificial

religion. From this the ameliorating influence should have flowed, and subdued the uncouth fortress of idolatry. But the Mussulmans had no moral ascendancy with which to support their lessons. The familiarity of long residence was unattended by esteem or confidence. In intellect the Hindús knew themselves to be their equals, if not their superiors. The lessons of Manu and the Koran had to be compared on their abstract merits, and this comparison the Hindús were incapable of making.

Akbar's plan of a compromise, with the usual fate of compromises, was manifestly insufficient for its purpose. It was an appeal to reason in a case where the Hindús could not, and the Mohammedans would not, reason. It was equally improbable that the Hindús should wake, at the call of a Mogul, from their religious stupor to reason and activity; and that the sensual attractions of the prophet's paradise should be resigned by his followers for the uncertainties of a vague speculation. The only value that his philosophic dreams possessed, was derived from the example, which he set, and which he invited all men to follow, of individual thought. Unreflecting conformity with antiquity had been the bane of the empire. If men could but be induced to wander away from the traditions of the Brahmans or the precepts of the Koran, however wild and heterodox their flights might be, there was a greater chance of their subsequent union into a common and sensible faith, than while they remained chained to their separate creeds. He may have been of the same opinion as the free-

thinking philosopher of Ferney¹, that two religions were more mischievous than a greater number. However, in the practical details of his changes, he did all that the most enlightened statesman of our own days could have suggested. He extended a uniform toleration to both religions, and, at the same time, prohibited all traits of each, which were inhuman, degrading, or impolitic. His instinctive good sense, and consistent benevolence, led him to conclusions which have been adopted in England after centuries of factious strife and political misgiving. The narrow arguments, which prevailed for so long concerning the limited sectarian subdivisions of our population, the danger of their admission to political equality, the duty of restraining them by statutes and penalties, must have been urged with exaggerated obstinacy by the Muftis of Delhi, where the suspected body outnumbered many times the established party². It is difficult sufficiently to admire the firmness and foresight of Akbar, in persisting in his experiment.

If we allow to Aurengzebe the credit of really wishing by repressive measures to induce the conversion of the Hindús, and acquit him of acting from prejudice or irritation, we shall rescue his memory from the charge of malignity; but it will not increase

¹ "Si vous avez deux religions chez vous, elles se couperont la gorge; si vous en avez trente, elles vivront en paix."—Voltaire, *Œuvres*, T. 43. p. 344.

² According to Elphinstone the proportion is that of one to eight for the whole peninsula. In Bengal, east of the Ganges, where Mohammedans most abound, they form nearly one half of the population.—*Hist. of India*, p. 426, 2nd edition.

his political reputation. He will fall into the category of arbitrary persecuting monarchs, his efforts crowned with neither more nor less than the usual success. A wiser mode of employing compression would have been to put down caste distinctions with a strong hand. This would have been more feasible than an abrupt attack upon the religion, and, if successful, would have deprived it of its most important bulwark. By prohibiting fairs and pilgrimages the Emperor destroyed the only occasions on which the restrictions of caste were relaxed. At the temple of Juggannath, the crowds of pilgrims mingled together and ate together unreservedly. For amusement, religion, and traffic, they clustered round the car of their great idol, and there, like the Greeks at the altar of Olympian Zeus, they were reminded that they formed one nation. This temporary union may have been an object of suspicion to Aurengzebe, but, had his sagacity penetrated more deeply into the nature of Hinduism, he could have made these very gatherings instrumental to his preliminary attack on caste.

The theory of persecution has long been given up. Its defence has been shifted from point to point in revolving ages, and has been dislodged from all. In the early ages of Christianity its practice was upheld by St Augustine; and his authority long sufficed to silence opposition. Later ecclesiastics contended that punishment was an act of charity to the unbeliever, and that it was better for a heretic that his body should be burned in this world, than his

soul for ever lost in the other. That which had been an honest conviction in the minds of St Bernard and many of equally pure character, degenerated into a cloke for hypocrisy and oppression; and the doom of the condemned victim of the Inquisition was concealed under a formula which resigned him to the last offices of mercy. The leaders of the Reformation were not in advance of their age; and the death of Servetus cast the first stain upon Protestantism and the memory of Calvin. The pulpits of Geneva and St Andrews resounded with acrimony as vindictive, with arrogance as presumptuous as had disgraced the days of Romish supremacy. In the sixteenth century persecution was the principle and practice of all churches. In the seventeenth it was ably and successfully assailed. Arminian and Independent ministers first preached the doctrines of a free toleration. Jeremy Taylor threw a new light on the subject by means of what was called his "sceptical" argument. He contended that a retrospect of past persecutions of Arian by Athanasian, and Athanasian by Arian, of the mutual excommunications of Gnostic, Ebionite, Carpocratian, and all kinds of schismatics, together with the recent and frequent instances in which reformed Protestants had been sent to the stake by princes who had subsequently embraced the tenets which they had condemned, ought to check persecution, by arousing in every man's conscience the conviction of the liability to error of the doctrines of his own communion. Infallibility alone, as he observed, could justify persecution; and by its assump-

tion the Romish Church evaded the force of his argument. Locke, with his associates and followers, concluded the discussion by defining the true nature of civil government, and depriving it of the paternal character, the claim to which had descended from simple and patriarchal times, and had been used to defend interference with religious opinions. Isolated instances of the practice of persecution have been known since its theory has been demolished ; but it was under the veil of punishing sedition and rebellion, that the dragoons of Louis XIV. and the troopers of Claverhouse emulated the atrocities of the legionaries of Diocletian. Our own century witnessed a sad but an expiring outbreak of the sanguinary sentiments of the past, in the cruelties which the Protestant inhabitants of the department of the Gard endured on the restoration of the Bourbons.

“ Lavaren nostri mans,
Din ton sang di Proutestans ! ”


was the cry of the triumphant adherents of the Church and the legitimate family¹. The passions which flamed in the great French revolution overpowered the dictates of reason and humanity. It may be confidently said now, that education and civilization have expelled from Europe the systematic defence and avowed practice of persecution, as an element of theological strife.

It is in the light thrown upon our own empire and our own subjects in the East, that the passages in Indian history which we have been considering

¹ Wilks' *History of the Persecutions in France*.

appear in their most interesting aspect. It is admitted that Christianity has made but little progress during the period of English supremacy. Great caution and timidity have throughout characterised our behaviour towards the natives, in all matters affecting their national prejudices. The efforts of individual zeal to disseminate the Gospel have been checked and made to conform to the official standard of discretion. So great has been the care, with which we have abstained from pressing our views upon the natives, that, unable to comprehend our inactivity, they have been led to suspect us of concealed and intricate designs. Having awakened distrust, where our object had been to inspire confidence, the consequences of our having put arms into the hands of the Sepoy battalions, became apparent. The advantages of science and discipline had been resigned; and the secrets of the success of the Europeans communicated to their ancient antagonists. With hands thus tied by apprehension the conquerors went feebly and tardily to the work of conversion. Too many voices were found ready to discourage and intimidate, and even deny the existence of any duty on our part to propagate Christianity. The existence of such a duty it is unnecessary to demonstrate. On no other principle can the subjection of that immense peninsula to the rule of a distant island and an alien race, be justified and explained, than the admission that a great work has to be accomplished there. Our policy and legislation have been actuated too much by a sole regard to the apparent interests of

Great Britain, and by neglect of the rights and necessities of India. If we allow, as few will be prepared to deny, that the truths of Christianity are beneficial to men, no reason can be assigned, justifying our retention of them from the Hindus. The system upon which we should proceed may be a matter of dispute. The example of our Mussulman predecessors seems to prove that there is no course to be pursued by us but the slow process of patient and laborious teaching. Education must be the handmaid of Religion. The difficult but noble task lies before our rulers of raising the moral and mental tone of many millions of their fellow-creatures, and emancipating them from the bonds under which they have been held by ignorance and superstition. Our teachers and missionaries must be protected and encouraged. Every year of apathy and inactivity renders the task more difficult. The recent terrible outbreak sweeps away with it the habits and traditions of our former policy, and leaves the field open for a new system. It is idle to contend that the earliest proselytes will be those whose conversion is least desirable, the refuse of the population. Just as no man is justified in abandoning the sacred principles of liberty from distrust of their advocates, so no man is justified in decrying the work of the preachers of the Gospel, by pointing to natives who have embraced the new religion from motives of sordid speculation, or converts unable to explain in their entirety the doctrines which they profess. Who shall say where the seed may fall on good



ground, and where the plant will be without root and worthless? What we can do, we must do, and, if a blessing attend the work of our missionaries, we may defy the struggles of fanaticism, and the warnings of faint-heartedness. If our efforts be without success, and if the conversion of India be reserved for other hands and a different age, the temporal dangers predicted will be diminished in proportion. The supineness of a hundred years has resulted in the convulsion of our whole Indian Empire. In behalf of a more honest and vigorous expression of our confidence in the truths of our revealed religion, we have at least the melancholy argument, that it is impossible for the consequences which may result to be sadder or more humiliating.

THE END.

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